

been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by my friend and fellow Alaskan, Congressman DON YOUNG. This legislation would enable the Olgoonik Native Village Corp. of Wainwright, AK to purchase at fair market value the 1,518-acre Wainwright Short Range Radar Site, SRRS, located in northern Alaska.

Originally deployed as the location for a Distant Early-Warning, DEW, Line radar station in northern Alaska, President Harry Truman withdrew the site for use as a military radar station during the Cold War in 1952. That station expanded in 1957 to enable the Air Force to track aircraft or rockets entering U.S. air space from the polar region. The station at Wainwright actually had a rather short lifespan, as its radars were replaced by more powerful systems in other locations starting in 1963.

In the years since then, the buildings and a fuel tank farm near an airstrip at the site—located several miles southeast of the village of Wainwright on Wainwright Inlet—have been abandoned by the U.S. Air Force. In 1974, the site was given to the Federal Bureau of Land Management, BLM, to manage. In 1976, the lands, then located in the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4, were formally transferred from the Air Force to Department of the Interior's control when the area was renamed as part of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. While the site over the years was used by the National Weather Service as a short range radar site, the land is no longer in Federal use and has undergone environmental cleanup and restoration efforts. Those efforts began in 1998 and were completed in August 2013, with final testing and removal of contaminated soils expected to be finished by the end of summer 2014.

Management of the lands around the site has changed significantly with time. With passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971, the Wainwright Native Village Corporation, Olgoonik, received title to the surface estate of about 175,000 acres surrounding the village. The subsurface of the lands were owned by the Arctic Slope Regional Corp., ASRC, part of the nearly 5 million acres that ASRC received from the lands claims settlement for the benefit of its nearly 8,000 Native shareholders who live in Arctic Alaska.

Olgoonik Corp., which has a variety of subcompanies, won the Air Force contract through its Specialty Contractors subsidiary, to demolish, clean up, and remediate the DEW Line site. Its development corporation has also acquired a lease on 27.5 acres of the site to allow its use for economic activities of benefit to the villagers. The company is now seeking to pay fair market value to buy the entire site, which would allow use of the existing fuel tank farm near the site's 6,000-foot runway. The site could well be used in the future to support activities in the Arc-

tic Ocean, a northern port becoming an issue of great interest in Alaska given the reduction in the Arctic ice pack and concerns about greater maritime transit of the Northwest Passage.

Normally, legislation would not be needed to permit the sale of a surplus tract because BLM could use its existing authority to surplus the site and dispose of it. However, in passage of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Act, NPR-A, in 1976 Congress included a provision that does not permit the BLM to dispose of property inside the NPR-A without congressional approval. Thus, legislation in this case is needed simply to permit disposition of the surplus tract.

Under my legislation, Olgoonik will be allowed to purchase the site but only after the corporation pays for a required land survey and pays for an appraisal, based on fair market value for the property. I should add that this legislation is only being introduced after talks among the village and regional Native corporations, the city of Wainwright, and the Wainwright Traditional-tribal-Council resulted in signed resolutions of support for Olgoonik's acquisition of the site. All Native entities supported the legislation during a formal BLM tribal consultation effort that occurred on June 23, 2014, reaffirming a November 2013 resolution that supported the legislation and land sale/purchase. All parties agreed to support the land acquisition after careful consideration of the environmental issues involved with future management of the tract.

Clearly, the legislation is best for the BLM as it will relieve the agency of the cumbersome effort to manage the isolated parcel, which is located far away from other BLM land holdings inside NPR-A. It is best for the environment as the agreement among the corporation, city, and tribe will guarantee that no activities occur on the land that are not acceptable to village residents—the land's need for subsistence hunting being best protected by ownership by the Native Corporation. And the land sale will be best for the citizens of Wainwright and the entire North Slope as it will guarantee that any development activities will be controlled by residents of the village and not outside interests.

This is the best outcome for all concerned, and I hope this legislation will be given swift consideration and passage by Congress.

#### VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATIVE PARTNER PROGRAM

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, it is a privilege to be a part of the national commemoration that will honor the service of our Vietnam veterans and their families.

During this conflict, nearly 350,000 Pennsylvanians served their Nation. Of that number, 3,149 paid the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives for the United States of America.

I deeply appreciate the Commonwealth's participation in The Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program that thanks our Vietnam veterans for their service. Although no commemoration can fully honor the profound sacrifice of those who served in Vietnam, I strongly believe we should use the war's 50th anniversary as an opportunity to further honor those who saw our Nation through one of its most troubling conflicts and ensure that their legacy is not forgotten.

A grateful nation thanks the veterans of this war, some never to return to the families they left behind. We should all hope to live our lives in a manner that befits their service and sacrifice.

#### WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. SCOTT. Madam President, I am pleased the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA, into law last week to improve job training in the United States. WIOA is the result of a commitment in both parties and both Chambers to modernize our workforce development system to ensure American competitiveness. The last time a Workforce Investment Act reauthorization was signed into law was in 1998, far too long ago, and the significant skills gap we face as a nation is evidence that our fragmented system simply is not working.

Despite the billions of taxpayer dollars we invest annually on Federal job training programs, there are 4.5 million unfilled jobs and a staggering 10 million unemployed Americans. We need to bridge this gap, and WIOA helps get us there by reducing bureaucracy and providing American workers with a more flexible and effective workforce training system. Over the past year, I have heard from businesses, elected State and local leaders, and families back home about the critical need for reforms to our job training system, and I am glad to have had the chance to work on this bill and be a part of this process in the Senate.

This legislation incorporates many reforms contained in the SKILLS Act, which I introduced in the Senate earlier this year, including the elimination of 15 programs identified as duplicative or ineffective and countless Federal mandates on States and local boards. In addition, WIOA establishes common performance metrics and requires independent evaluations every 4 years of all workforce programs to ensure effectiveness and accountability to taxpayers. By reducing bureaucracy and enhancing flexibility, WIOA eliminates delays that hinder job seekers from immediately accessing job training services and reentering the workforce.

I thank Senators ALEXANDER, HARKIN, ISAKSON, and MURRAY and Representative FOXX for their leadership on this issue and am pleased to see this